

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G. #71A-28 Building Date: late 1880's

Building Name: Graham House

Location: 7711 Hillmeade Road, Bowie, Maryland 20715

Private/Residence/Occupied/Fair/Inaccessible

Description

The Graham House is a three-part frame farmhouse which stands on a six-acre lot between Lanham-Severn Road and the Amtrak railroad tracks. It is a two-and-one-half-story gable-front-and-wing-plan house, to which a two-story wing was later added. The property is presently being landscaped to serve as a garden center. The principal facade is to the south, facing the railroad tracks, and consists of a one-bay gable front section to the west, with a three-bay wing extending to the east. The principal entrance is in the first bay of the wing, through a double door with a single pane transom. The door has a classical surround with crown molding. A one-story porch fills the recessed area formed by the gable front and the wing. The porch has chamfered posts with jig-sawn brackets; it is supported by tree stumps. At the east gable end of this wing is a rectangular one-story projecting bay. The gable-front-and-wing main block is sheathed with German siding, now covered with beige asbestos shingle. The west facade is sheltered by a one-story porch similar to that on the south facade; the west porch, however, rests on brick piers. Extending to the north from the rear (north) facade of the wing is a two-story gable-roof addition, roughly three bays by one bay.

Significance

The Graham House at St. John's Herb Garden is a large version of the gable-front-and-wing plan, a popular Victorian vernacular house type. It was built in the 1890's, as a home for Dr. J. T. Perkins. Dr. J. T. Perkins was the eldest son of James Turner Perkins, wealthy and prominent landowner whose homestead was a short distance to the north. It was the elder Perkins who had established Perkins Chapel in the 1860's; he owned well over 1,000 acres in the immediate area at the time of his death in 1898. In 1873, J. Turner Perkins had purchased from (Governor) Oden Bowie, 20 acres of land at Springfield, intending to take advantage of the newly operating railroad between Bowie and Washington. Just north of and facing the railroad, Perkins had a house built for his eldest son, Dr. James T. Perkins, in the late 1880's. The house was simple in design, but embellished with two bracketed porches as well as a projecting bay. After its sale in 1933, the house was leased to tenants for many years and deteriorated considerably. It was purchased in 1984 by St. John's Herb Garden, and the grounds around it are being landscaped and developed into gardens. Once restored, the house will be a handsome and visible landmark at this still rural intersection of road and railway.

Acreage: 6.07 acres

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Dr. J.T. Perkins House

and/or common Graham House (St. John's Herb Garden)

2. Location

street & number 7711 Hillmeade Rd., _____ not for publication

city, town Bowie _____ Springfield _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 5

state Md. _____ county P.G.

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Sidney V. Blackenship

street & number 7711 Hillmeade Rd., _____ telephone no.:

city, town Bowie _____ state and zip code Md. 20715

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. P.G. County Courthouse _____ liber #5992

street & number Main Street _____ folio 109

city, town Upper Marlboro _____ state Md.

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records

city, town _____ state

7. Description

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Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Graham House is a three-part frame farmhouse which stands on a six-acre lot between Lanham-Severn Road and the Amtrak railroad tracks. It is a two-and-one-half-story gable-front-and-wing-plan house, to which a two-story wing was later added. The property is presently being landscaped to serve as an Herb Garden.

The principal facade is to the south, facing the railroad tracks, and consists of a one-bay gable front section to the west, with a three-bay wing extending to the east. A new double door has been installed in the one-bay south gable front. At loft level in this two-and-one-half-story section is a four-pane round-arched window. The principal entrance is in the first bay of the wing, through a double door with a single pane transom. Each leaf of the door has a window over a single molded panel. The door has a classical surround with crown molding. The first story windows on this south facade of the wing are 2/4 double hung sash; they are full length, and open into a one-story porch which fills the recessed area formed by the gable front and the wing. The porch has chamfered posts with jig-sawn brackets; it is supported by tree stumps. At the east gable end of this wing is a rectangular projecting bay; it is one-story high, has four 1/1 windows, and rests on a brick foundation above it at loft level is a four-pane square window.

The gable-front-and-wing main block is sheathed with German siding, now covered with beige asbestos shingle. Windows are generally 2/2 double hung sash (except the first story of the south facade, as noted above); they have plain board surrounds with crown molding. The two first-story bays on the west facade have been converted to doors (fifteen-pane glazed doors with single-pane transom), thus changing the orientation of the house toward the west. The casing of each door has the same crown molding as the window lintels. The west facade is sheltered by a one-story porch similar to that on the south facade; the west porch, however, rests on brick piers. The roof is covered with dark asphalt shingle. The foundation is composed of large chunks of local iron-bearing stone.

Extending to the north from the rear (north) facade of the wing is a two-story gable-roof addition, roughly three bays by one bay. Siding and roof materials are the same as the main block; most windows are replacements. The north addition rests on a foundation of thin stones, reinforced in places by concrete block.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1880's

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Graham House at St. John's Herb Garden is a large version of the gable-front-and-wing plan folk Victorian dwelling. It was originally built to face the tracks of the railroad branch line into Washington, but was later reoriented to face the old Springfield Road. It was built in the 1890's, as a home for Dr. J. T. Perkins.

Dr. J. T. Perkins was the eldest son of James Turner Perkins, wealthy and prominent landowner whose homestead was a short distance to the north. It was the elder Perkins who had established Perkins Chapel in the 1860's; he owned well over 1,000 acres in the immediate area at the time of his death in 1898.¹

In 1873, J. Turner Perkins had purchased from (Governor) Oden Bowie, 20 acres of land at Springfield, intending to take advantage of the newly operating railroad between Bowie and Washington. This twenty-acre parcel included land on both sides of the railroad and of Springfield Road, as well as the location of the Springfield Station. Fifteen years later, Perkins' second son, Edward Everett Perkins, purchased 303 more acres from Bowie, adjoining his father's earlier purchase on the north.² (On this land, E.E. Perkins built his home, Graceland, circa 1892, cf. P.G. #71A-27.) Just north of and facing the railroad, the elder Perkins had a house built for his eldest son, Dr. James T. Perkins, in the late 1880's.³ The house was an example of the gable-front-and-wing plan, a popular Victorian vernacular house type. It was simple in design, but embellished with a two bracketed porches as well as a projecting bay. It fronted on the railroad tracks, a highly desirable location for that period.

Dr. Perkins died at an early age in 1901 (three years after his father), and his widow left the Springfield area. The estate was administered by Edward E. Perkins, and was later sold (1933) to J.J. T. Graham, who lived there until the 1960's. The house has been leased to tenants for many years, and has considerably deteriorated. It was purchased in 1984 by

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PS-2746

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Description (continued)

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There are three outbuildings north of the house: a small square shed with gable roof, a larger partially open shed/stable to the north, in deteriorated condition, and a third gable-roof storage shed east of the stable. To the east of the house the land is devoted to herb gardens; south of the house is a small pond and patio area. The grounds are accessible by driveways both from Lanham-Severn Road to the north, and Hillmeade Road to the west.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

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St. John's Herb Garden, and the grounds around it are being landscaped and developed into gardens.⁵ The house has considerable potential for restoration, and will be a handsome and visible landmark at this still rural intersection of road and railway.

Notes

- 1 cf. Perkins Chapel, P.G. #64-5.
- 2 Prince George's County Deeds HB #7:322; JWB #9:321.
- 3 Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1888-1900.
- 4 Prince George's County Will JBP #1:475; Deed #392:133.
- 5 Prince George's county Deed #5992:109.

R-R

71A-27

-71A-28

R-E

SPRINGFIELD

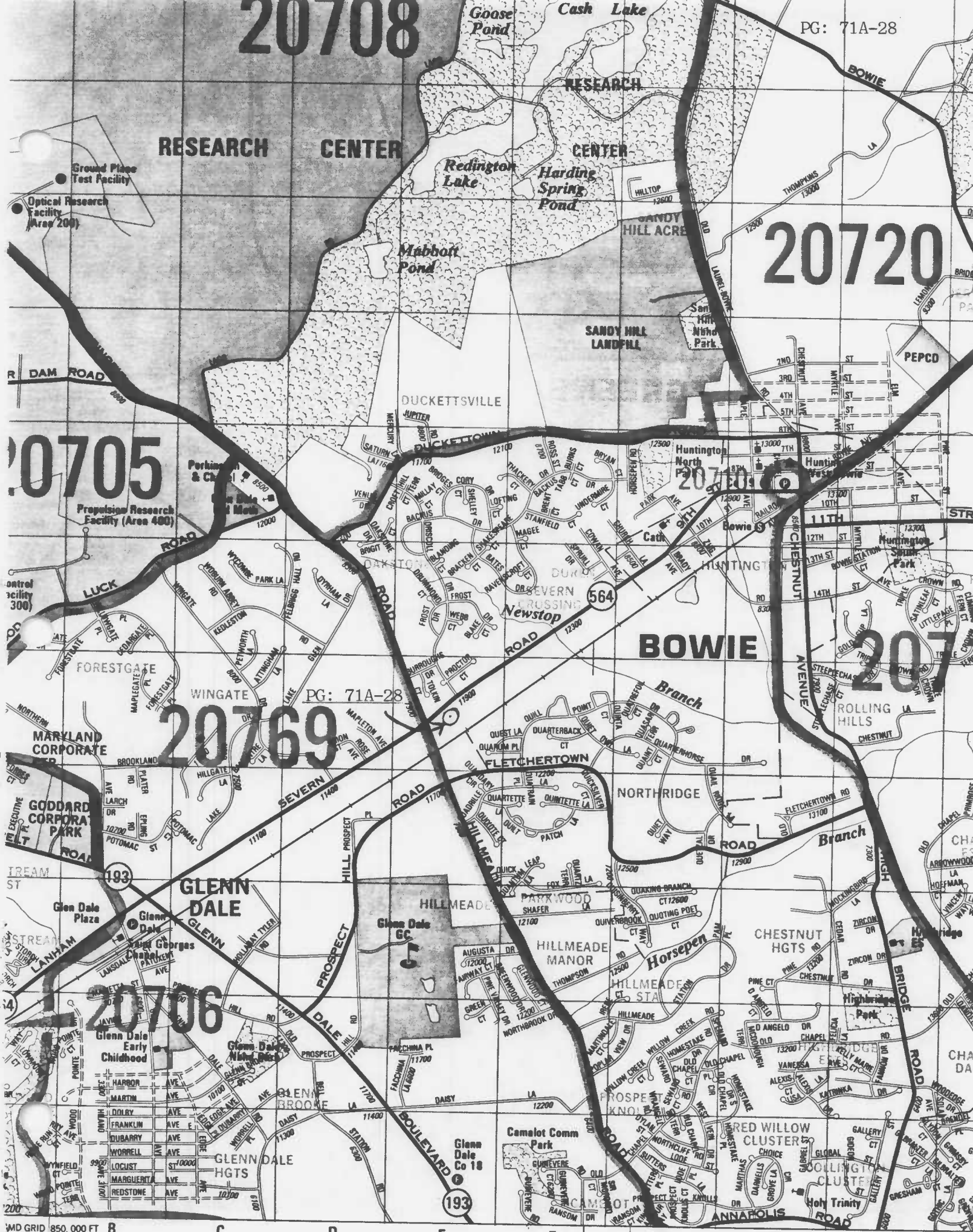
R-R

R-E

C-M

R-R

CURTIS DWORREN
3212/561







PG#71A-28

Graham House
Prince George's County, Md.
Susan G. Pearl
February 1986
West elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



PG#71A-28

Graham House
Prince George's County, Md.
Susan G. Pearl
February 1986
South elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



PG#71A-28

Graham House
Prince George's County, Md.
Susan G. Pearl
February 1986
East elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



PG#71A-28

Graham House
Prince George's County, Md.
Susan G. Pearl
February 1986
North elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.